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ABSTRACT
A questionnaire dealing with several aspects of teaching social issues in the classroom was mailed to 682 biology, English, and social studies teachers in a probability sample of public and private secondary schools in Michigan. Chi square and analysis of variance tests were used in analyzing the 493 (73%) responses. Included in the questionnaire were several items used to develop a scale entitled "Belief in Traditional Sociopolitical Values" (BTSV). Findings indicated that teachers vary considerably in their belief in traditional values. Teachers scoring low on the BTSV scale, as opposed to those with high scores, (1) are more willing to discuss all controversial issues in the classroom; (2) use instructional materials from several sources, thus promoting the expression of divergent and often conflicting points of view; and (3) demonstrate greater ability to distinguish fact from opinion. Examination of demographic factors revealed that (1) teachers who major in fields other than social sciences and humanities as undergraduates tend to score high on the scale, and (2) those with high BTSV scores are more often physical education, education, or natural science majors who attened smaller colleges and have had more years of teaching experience. Sex, tenure status, type of community, and level of graduate education do not seem to be related to BTSV scores. (SP 003 022 is a related document.) (JS)

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BELIEF IN TRADITIONAL SOCIOPOLITICAL VALUES AND THE DISCUSSION OF SOCIAL ISSUES

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Studies related to the examination of controversial social issues in the schools have generally emphasized the influence of pressure groups and movements as well as school and community relations regarding academic freedom.[1] There has been very little investigation of the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward sociopolitical values and the teaching of controversial social issues. The purpose of this phase of the study is to determine if, in the discussion of social issues, teachers who have a strong belief in traditional sociopolitical values differ significantly on various dimensions from teachers who have a low belief in traditional sociopolitical values.

Rational examination of social issues involves, among other things, the ability of an individual or group to consider divergent social and personal values, gather and process conflicting data, and separate fact from opinion. In a period of overt social conflict and controversy, it is imperative that teachers be able to utilize and help their students develop these critical thinking skills. Application of these skills in the classroom requires openness and flexibility on the part of all the participants, a willingness to explore all points of view, to examine publicly personal belief systems, and to search continually for relevant evidence.

Several recent studies using Rokeach's dogmatism scale indicate that, when faced with conflicting evidence or a decision-making situation, individuals who rank high on the dogmatism scale limit their intake of information. For example, from findings in their study, Long and Ziller concluded that in decision-making situations the dogmatic individual tends to demonstrate limited or inadequate predecisional search while the nondogmatic person tends to delay decision or reserve judgment and to search for and utilize additional information.[2] The investigators speculated that by limiting the intake of information, the dogmatic individual is able to maintain his closed conceptual system.

These findings have important implications for the examination of social issues in the classroom. Since positions on social

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[1]John P. Lunstrum, "The Treatment of Controversial Issues in Social Studies Instruction," New Challenges in the Social Studies: Implications of Research for Teaching, eds. B.G. Massialas and F.R. Smith (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 121-153.

[2]Barbara H. Long and Robert C. Ziller, "Dogmatism and Predecisional Information Search," Journal of Applied Psychology, XLIX (October, 1965), pp. 376-78. See also Gerald Miller and Kenn Roberts, "Communicator Race, Open and Closed-Mindedness and Response to Informative Communications," Audio-Visual Communication Review, XIII (Fall, 1965), pp. 259-69.

issues involve individual belief systems, it seems quite probable that teachers who have a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values would be reluctant to discuss all social issues, would tend to limit the search for information on a given issue, and would have difficulty distinguishing between fact and opinion statements. In this study, we propose to investigate these hypotheses.

PROCEDURES

The data analyzed in this study were gathered through the use of a questionnaire mailed to biology, English, and social studies teachers in a probability sample of secondary schools (grades 7-12) in the state of Michigan. Both public and private schools were included in the sample. The questionnaire was mailed to 682 teachers in the Fall of 1967, and 493 (or 73 percent) of the teachers responded.[3] The questionnaire dealt with many aspects of teaching social issues in the classroom. Teachers were asked how much time they spent discussing social issues, how controversial they considered specified issues, which issues they ordinarily discussed in the classroom, which topics they felt should not be discussed and why, and what materials they would ordinarily use for classroom units on such issues as population planning and Communism. Scales utilizing a combination of related items were developed where possible. The type of statistical model applied for the analysis depended on the nature of the data being examined. For nominal items, the chi square model was used to test for significance. For interval items, analysis of variance was used.

BELIEF IN TRADITIONAL SOCIOPOLITICAL VALUES

The questionnaire included a number of attitudinal items, and each teacher was asked to respond to these items with "strongly agree," "somewhat agree," "somewhat disagree," or "strongly disagree." A factor analysis using varimax rotation was performed on teacher responses to these attitudinal items. One of the clear factors which emerged from this analysis appeared to measure a teacher's

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[3]The procedure used to select the sample was as follows: The Michigan Education Directory obtained from Lansing, Michigan, which lists all of the public and private schools in the state, was used to make a list of all schools in the state containing grades 7-12. Schools which included two or more grades in our range of 7-12 were included in our sample. For example, schools containing grades 1-7 were not included in our list, but schools containing grades 5-8 were included. Each school included in our list was assigned a number. Using a random number table, sixty schools were selected for the first phase of our sample. The principals of the selected schools were contacted by mail and asked to participate in our study and to provide a list of all the biology, English, and social studies teachers in their building who taught any of the grades, 7 through 12. This list of teachers composed the second phase of the sampling procedure. Fifty-seven schools, with a total of 682 social studies, English, and biology teachers, agreed to participate.

belief in traditional sociopolitical values. The attitudinal items which loaded heavily on this factor are as follows:

	ITEM	LOADING
(1)	The main purpose of social studies courses is to teach students to be good and loyal citizens.	Positive
(2)	Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.	Positive
(3)	Young people should not have too easy access to questionable literature.	Positive
(4)	The American system of government is one that all nations should have.	Positive
(5)	A teacher has a responsibility to see that students develop the correct values.	Positive

The attitudes expressed by these statements reflect traditional views toward youth, the role of education, and the American system of government. To agree that "Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn" is to agree with the classic concept of the role of children who are expected to exhibit compliant rather than participatory behavior. The person with a high belief in these values assumes adults know better than children what is right and good. He is apt to agree with the statement that "A teacher has a responsibility to see that students develop the correct values" not only because he thinks correct values as such exist but also because he feels that the teacher, as an adult authority figure, would know better than his students what these correct values are.

Traditional values are rooted in the past and communicated from one generation to another. In many ways, items 1, 3, and 4 above are viewpoints prevalent among past generations. For example, the statement, "The main purpose of social studies courses is to teach students to be good and loyal citizens," is an assertion which may be found in many traditional lists of the aims of the social studies. The view that "The American system of government is one that all nations should have" was certainly more prevalent in earlier historical periods than today. As we are acquiring a more international perspective, we are realizing that the needs of other nations are different from ours, and that our form of government may not be appropriate for other nations. Finally, the statement, "Young people should not have too easy access to questionable literature," is very reflective of traditional Victorian attitudes toward sex.

Since all of the items above loaded heavily on a single factor and since all of these statements reflect traditional

views, we used these items to develop a scale entitled "Belief in Traditional Sociopolitical Values," (BTSV). A teacher's score on the scale was calculated as follows:

$$\text{BTSV Score} = \sum_{1}^{5} (4(SA) + 3(A) + 2(D) + (SD))$$

where SA = a response of strongly agree with the statement, A = somewhat agree, D = somewhat disagree, and SD = strongly disagree. A range of scores from 5-20 was possible; this range was collapsed into a scale from 1-12. The higher a teacher's score, the stronger his belief in authoritarian and traditional values.

It is important to point out how the BTSV scale in this study differs from the California F-Scale or Rokeach's dogmatism scale. Both the California F-Scale and Rokeach's dogmatism scale attempt to measure the total belief system of an individual. The F-Scale purports to measure general authoritarianism.[4] The dogmatism scale is designed "to measure individual differences in the extent to which belief systems are open or closed."[5] Although the BTSV scale undoubtedly measures aspects of authoritarianism and dogmatism tapped by the California and Rokeach scales, it is not designed to measure a total personality belief system, but concentrates instead on one aspect of an individual's belief system--his belief in traditional sociopolitical values. The BTSV scale was devised on the premise that traditional sociopolitical attitudes are particularly relevant to an analysis of classroom discussion of social issues. But only to the degree that any given sub-set of beliefs are part of a larger, integrated individual belief system, is the BTSV scale reflecting dimensions similar to those measured by the California F and dogmatism scales.

For purposes of further analysis, the teachers in the sample were sub-divided into three groups--those falling in the lower one-third of the scale were identified as the low group, those in the middle one-third were identified as the medium group, and those in the upper one-third were identified as the high group.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF HIGH BTSV TEACHERS

The investigators explored a number of demographic and personal variables which were hypothesized to be related to

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[4] A number of writers, however, including Rokeach, have argued that the F-scale probably measures rightist tendencies rather than general authoritarianism.

[5] Milton Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1960), p. 19.

high scores on the BTSV scale. These variables are discussed under a number of sub-headings below.

Undergraduate Major and Subject of Primary Interest

Brumbaugh, et. al., found that student-teachers in the subject matter areas of mathematics, science,and social studies are more dogmatic than those in foreign language, English, and the fine arts.[6] In view of these and similar findings, the teachers in the present study were asked to indicate their undergraduate major and area of primary teaching interest. Although all of the teachers taught either English, social studies, or biology, many had different or more specific academic preparation. This was particularly true of the social studies teachers who frequently had majored in a social science, such as political science, in college but were not teaching social studies. Also a number of social studies teachers were coaches and indicated that physical education or coaching was their primary interest.

The data presented in Table I indicate that there is a significant relationship (at the .01 level) between undergraduate major and belief in authoritarian and traditional values. Those teachers who majored in the natural sciences, physical education, and education tend to have a much higher belief in traditional sociopolitical values than those teachers who majored in the social sciences, English, history, and social studies. Of the social science majors in our study, 58 percent had a low belief in traditional sociopolitical values, while only 16 percent had a high belief in these values. Education and physical education majors showed the reverse pattern; 11 percent of the physical education majors and 25 percent of the education majors were in the low BTSV group while 63 percent and 50 percent, respectively, were in the high BTSV group.[7]

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[6]Robert B. Brumbaugh, Kenneth C. Hoedt, and William H. Beisel, Jr., "Teacher Dogmatism and Perceptual Accuracy," Journal of Teacher Education, XVII (Fall, 1966), p. 335.

[7]The reader should note that the number of cases in both the physical education and education categories is quite small, 19 and 12, respectively, and should keep this fact in mind when interpreting the data.

TABLE I

Belief in Traditional Sociopolitical Values by Undergraduate Major

Undergraduate Major	N	BTSV GROUPS Low	Medium	High	
Social Sciences	31	58%	26%	16%	100%
Natural Sciences	50	26%	38%	36%	100%
English	122	40%	34%	26%	100%
History	78	38%	33%	28%	100%
Social Studies	32	44%	28%	28%	100%
Physical Education	19	11%	26%	63%	100%
Education	12	25%	25%	50%	100%
Other	38	24%	45%	32%	100%
	N = 382	138	128	116	

Chi Square = 27.05**

** .01 level of significance

With the exception of the social studies teachers, our findings tend to demonstrate the same pattern as those of Brumbaugh, et. al. Teachers with undergraduate majors in the humanities and social sciences tend to have a less traditional outlook than teachers in the natural sciences. The two sets of findings relative to social studies teachers may reflect the different categories used in the two studies. The categories in the study of Brumbaugh, et. al., included the subjects taught by the student-teachers and did not include education or physical education as separate categories. In our study, the majority of teachers with undergraduate majors in physical education or education also taught social studies. It may be that the social studies category used by Brumbaugh, et. al, included not only liberal arts social studies majors, but also education and physical education majors who were student teaching in social studies. If this is the case, then the inclusion of education and physical education majors who rank very high on our BTSV scale compared to other groups, would probably have increased the over-all dogmatism rating of the group of social studies teachers studied by Brumbaugh, et. al.

Two possible explanations for the relationship between undergraduate major and belief in traditional sociopolitical

values come to mind. On the one hand, one might argue that social studies, English,and social science majors have more formal experience investigating social issues and thus are more critical in their acceptance of traditional values. The high belief in traditional sociopolitical values demonstrated by the natural science and education majors may simply reflect their limited contact with social issues and their acceptance of the traditional values relative to social phenomena of earlier years. The other possible explanation, and the one which seems to be supported by recent research, is that variations in belief in traditional sociopolitical values is due more to selective entrance into different disciplines than to the effects of the content of the fields on those pursuing them as students. Lipset points out that "studies of entering freshmen--i.e., those who have not yet taken a single lecture--report the same relationships between intended college major and political attitudes as are found among seniors, graduate students, and faculty."[8]

Although we found a definite relationship between undergraduate major and belief in traditional sociopolitical values, when the teachers in our study are grouped according to their area of primary interest (i.e., the subject which they indicated they would prefer to teach), the relationship between belief in traditional sociopolitical values and subject-matter taught is not significant.

TABLE II

Belief in Traditional Sociopolitical Values
By Area of Primary Interest

Area of Primary Interest	N	BTSV GROUPS Low	Medium	High	
Biology	59	25%	41%	34%	100%
English	158	37%	30%	33%	100%
Social Studies	151	39%	30%	30%	100%
Coaching and Physical Ed.	20	20%	30%	50%	100%
	N = 388	136	124	128	

Chi Square = 5.82 (not significant)

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[8]Lipset, Seymour Martin, "The Activists: A Profile," The Public Interest, No. 13 (Fall, 1968), p. 46.

The data in Table II indicate that teachers who identify biology as their major area of teaching concern rank higher on the BTSV scale than English or social studies teachers, but the difference between the groups is not significant. The only group which maintains the same significant pattern found in the analysis of undergraduate majors is the group consisting of coaches and physical education teachers.[9]

The explanation for these findings may relate to the conglomerate nature of the primary interest groups. Teachers in a given primary interest group (such as the social studies department) do not necessarily have similar undergraduate training or comparable current experiences critically investigating social issues. In our schools primary interest groups are frequently conglomerate groups, composed of individuals with a variety of undergraduate majors. In the social studies department, for example, we find teachers who majored in social science, history, social studies, physical education, education, and even English. The subject-matter that a teacher eventually teaches is often dependent not only on his undergraduate major, but also on the needs of the school system and his willingness to teach subjects outside his major.

College Attended for Undergraduate Degree

Since undergraduate majors were related to the BTSV groupings, it was hypothesized that the type of college the teachers attended for their undergraduate degree might also be related to the BTSV groupings. Specifically, the study investigated the size of college attended. Table III summarizes the results of this analysis.

The data indicate that in contrast to large institutions, the very small colleges tend to attract and perhaps reinforce individuals who have a higher belief in traditional sociopolitical values. The pattern in Table III, though, is not consistent; teachers who attended colleges with enrollments between 700-2500 rank lower on the BTSV scale than teachers who attended colleges with enrollments between 2500 and 9000. It may be that our results would be clearer or more meaningful if the size of college attended was combined with other factors such as the variety of degree offerings, the geographic location of the institution, the make-up of the faculty, and whether the college was public or private. For example, institutions with total enrollments of less than 700 probably have a limited number of courses and degree offerings. Institutions with enrollments between 700 and 2500 may be primarily colleges with strong emphasis on the liberal arts, while institutions with enrollments

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[9]The coaches and physical education teachers in our sample are not drawn from a universe of coaches or physical education teachers. They are social studies, English, or biology teachers, who also coach or teach physical education and view the latter duties as their primary area of interest.

between 2500 and 9000 may be colleges or universities which heavily emphasize teacher training programs. At the moment, however, we do not have sufficient data to explain fully the relationship between the type of college attended and scores on the BTSV scale.

TABLE III

Belief in Traditional Sociopolitical Values
By Size of College Attended for Undergraduate Degree[10]

Total College Enrollment	N	BTSV GROUPS Low	Medium	High	
0 - 700	28	18%	39%	43%	100%
700 - 2500	83	34%	43%	23%	100%
2500 - 9000	108	27%	31%	42%	100%
Over 9000	190	44%	26%	30%	100%
	N = 409	145	131	133	

Chi Square = 20.58**

** .01 level of significance

Years Teaching

The number of years an individual has taught appears as a significant variable in a variety of educational studies.[11] The data in Table IV indicate that in our study there is also a significant relationship between number of years teaching and BTSV Groups. It is evident from the data that older teachers, as measured by years teaching, tend to believe more in traditional sociopolitical values than younger teachers. Only 26 percent of the teachers who have taught a year or less rank in the upper one-

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[10]The teachers in the sample listed the institution from which they obtained their undergraduate degree. The enrollment figures for these institutions were obtained from Allan M. Cartter (ed.), American Universities and Colleges (9th ed.; Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1964).

[11]See, for example, Harmon Zeigler, The Political World of the High School Teacher (Eugene, Oregon: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1966), pp. 40-50. Zeigler found that as teaching experience increases, so does political conservatism; with additional teaching experience, there is reluctance to speak in class about controversial topics.

third of the BTSV scale, while 49 percent of the teachers who have taught between 21-30 years and 68 percent of the teachers who have taught over 30 years rank in the upper one-third of the scale. Approximately 40 percent of the teachers who have taught five years or less are in the low BTSV group, while only 27 percent of the teachers who have taught six years or more are in the low BTSV group.

TABLE IV

Belief in Traditional Sociopolitical Values
By Years Teaching

		BTSV GROUPS			
Years Teaching	N	Low	Medium	High	
0 - 1	86	42%	33%	26%	100%
2 - 3	103	38%	38%	24%	100%
4 - 5	48	46%	19%	35%	100%
6 - 10	79	27%	35%	38%	100%
11 - 20	82	33%	33%	34%	100%
21 - 30	41	27%	24%	49%	100%
Over 30	25	8%	24%	68%	100%
N =	464	158	147	159	

Chi Square = 32.27**

**.01 level of significance

An analysis of variance was also applied to the data. The F-Ratio for the three groups on the variable, years teaching, is 10.82, which is significant at the .01 level. The t-Ratio for a comparison of the means for the low BTSV group and the high BTSV group is -4.52 (df=317), which indicates that the teachers in the high BTSV group have been teaching significantly more years than the teachers in the low BTSV group (.001 level of significance). It may be that these results reflect the fact that "number of years teaching" is also highly correlated with the age of the teachers and that the chronologically older teachers have a stronger belief in traditional sociopolitical values than the "new generation" of teachers.

The generalization that as number of years teaching increases teachers' belief in traditional sociopolitical values also increases does not appear to hold for the teachers who have taught 4-5 years. This group of teachers does not fit the generally observed pattern. As a group, they tend to dichotomize into the upper one-third and lower one-third of the BTSV scale. As expected, the percent of teachers in the high BTSV

group increases accordingly and conforms to the generally observed pattern, but there is a change in the pattern for the middle and low BTSV groups. Teachers whom one would expect to be in the middle BTSV group are instead in the low BTSV group.

Why does the 4-5 year group show this shift? It may be that teachers who have had several years of teaching experience and who, in the majority of cases, have acquired tenure are more confident and do not attempt to modify their attitudes because of professional or community pressures. It may well be that many of the 0-3 year teachers who are in the medium BTSV group are less sure of themselves and feel constrained by perceived professional and community pressure. Teachers who have been teaching 4-5 years are a unique group. For the most part they have just obtained tenure and many are beginning to be groomed for administrative positions. After this point many dissatisfied teachers undoubtedly leave the profession and many good teachers are enticed away from classroom teaching into administrative or guidance roles. Since the teachers who have been teaching 6-10 years again shift toward a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values, it is quite probable that many of the 4-5 year teachers who had a low belief in traditional values have left the classroom.

Teacher's Home Location

The other demographic variable which was somewhat intriguing was the home location of the teachers in relation to the school. The data in Table V indicate that teachers who live within the school community in which they teach have a significantly higher belief in traditional sociopolitical values than teachers who live outside the school community in which they teach. Thirty-eight percent of the teachers who live within the school community are in the high BTSV group while only 28 percent of the teachers who live outside the school community are in the high BTSV group.

Why do teachers who live in the same community in which they teach generally score higher on the BTSV scale than teachers who live outside the community? The answer may lie in the teachers' relation to community pressure groups. Teachers who live within the community are undoubtedly more aware of community pressure groups and more sensitive to possible threats from these groups. They may feel more constrained by community pressures and as a result adopt more traditional stances in their attitudes. Teachers who live outside the community are not only apt to be less familiar with the various community pressure groups, but are also probably less worried about what effect conflict with these groups would have on their families and personal lives. Perhaps not living in the community gives the teacher a measure of independence.

TABLE V

Belief in Traditional Sociopolitical Values
Home Location in Relation to the School

		BTSV GROUPS			
Home Location	N	Low	Medium	High	
Teacher lives within school community	268	33%	29%	38%	100%
Teacher lives outside school community	198	33%	39%	28%	100%
	N = 466	156	149	159	

Chi Square = 8.70*

* .05 level of significance

Other Demographic Variables

Several other demographic variables were also investigated, but they did not prove to be significantly related to rankings on the BTSV scale. These included sex, tenure status, type of community, and the highest level of education attained. We found no difference between the sexes on the BTSV scale (chi = .00) and almost no difference between teachers who had acquired tenure and those who had not (chi = .03). We found that the level of education a teacher had attained (Bachelor, Master, Specialist, or Doctorate degree) and the type of community in which he taught (farming, small town, suburban area, or large city) made very little difference in his belief in traditional sociopolitical values.

DISCUSSION OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM

A major hypothesis of this study is that teachers who have a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values, as measured by a high score on the BTSV scale, would differ significantly from teachers with a low belief in traditional social values on several measures related to the classroom investigation of social issues. We were interested in both quantitative and qualitative measures. For instance, do the BTSV groupings differ in the amount of time they spend discussing social issues, or is it the more qualitative dimensions, such as type of issue discussed, use of source materials, or nature of the classroom interaction which distinguish the BTSV groupings?

Time Spent and Number of Issues Discussed

The two quantitative measures used in this study to characterize discussion of social issues in the classroom were developed from a series of questions pertaining to the number of social issues the teachers discussed in the classroom and the time they spent discussing issues which they regarded as controversial.

Specifically, the teachers were given a list of thirteen social issues and asked if they had discussed one or more of the issues in the last month.[12] There was no significant difference between the responses of the BTSV groups on this variable. Ninety-one percent of the low BTSV group indicated that they had discussed one or more of the issues in the last month while 88 percent of the high BTSV group indicated that they had discussed one or more of the issues. When asked to indicate the total number of issues they ordinarily discuss and the total number of issues discussed during the past month, the groups showed no significant differences (F-Ratios = 1.08 and 1.72, respectively). These findings, which are summarized as part of Tables VII and VIII, indicate that belief in traditional sociopolitical values is not related to the total number of social issues discussed in the classroom.

The teachers were also asked to indicate the percent of class time they ordinarily spend discussing issues which they considered controversial. The data in Table VI indicate that although teachers in the low BTSV group tend to spend more time discussing controversial issues (57 percent devote 10 percent or more of their classroom time discussing issues) than teachers in the medium or high BTSV groups (43 percent spend 10 percent or more of their classroom time discussing issues), the relationship between BTSV groups and time spent discussing controversial issues is not significant.

It is evident then that for the two quantitative measures, "number of issues discussed" and "time spent discussing controversial issues," there is no significant difference between the BTSV groups.

All groups discuss approximately the same number of issues and spend a similar portion of their class time doing so.

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[12]Table VII lists the topics which were included. Three of these topics (Management-labor Relations, Federal Aid to Education, and the Railroad Baron Era) were considered relatively non-controversial by the investigators and also ranked as relatively non-controversial by the teachers in the study.

TABLE VI

TIME SPENT DISCUSSING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Time spent discussing controversial issues	N	BTSV GROUPS Low	Medium	High
0 - 10%	245	43%	58%	57%
10 - 25%	165	42%	32%	32%
25 - 50%	42	12%	8%	7%
50 - 100%	16	3%	3%	4%
		100%	100%	100%
Total N =	468	159	149	160

Chi Square - 8.35 (not significant)

What is not included in these quantitative measures, however, is an indication of the quality of the investigation of social issues in the classroom. From these measures, for example, one does not know what specific issues are being discussed or not discussed, what materials are being used, or anything about the style of the discussion. The remainder of this paper concentrates on various measures related to some of these qualitative aspects.

Topics Which Should Not Be Discussed

One of the hypotheses in this study is that teachers with a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values would be reluctant to discuss a range of specified social issues. This hypothesis is premised on the belief that, instead of making available all topics for possible classroom discussion, teachers who score high on the BTSV scale tend to limit the range of social issues discussed, dismissing those issues which they do not think are appropriate for their class.

To test this hypothesis, the teachers in the study were given a list of social issues and were asked to indicate those which they felt should not be discussed in the classroom. The topics included in the questionnaire are listed in Table VII along with the percent of individuals in each of the BTSV groups who felt that the topic should not be discussed in the classroom.

The data in Table VII indicate that teachers with a low belief in traditional sociopolitical values are, in general,

TABLE VII

TOPICS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED IN THE CLASSROOM

	BTSV GROUPS(a)			
Topics	Low	Medium	High	Chi
Federal Aid to Education	04%	04%	07%	1.48
Race Relations and Integration	00%	02%	02%	3.73
Marriage and Family Relations	05%	09%	07%	1.71
LSD and "Pot"	01%	01%	07%	10.21**
Management-labor Relations	04%	10%	07%	3.78
Communist Ideology	02%	08%	06%	6.23*
Railroad Baron Era	08%	19%	16%	7.04*
Pornography and Its Control	17%	22%	22%	1.80
Biological Evolution	13%	19%	15%	1.97
Birth Control	28%	26%	31%	1.23
Censorship	00%	03%	02%	5.27
Vietnam	01%	03%	02%	2.14
Artificial Insemination of Human Beings	37%	48%	58%	14.27***

* .05 level of significance
** .01 level of significance
*** .001 level of significance

(a) Percent of teachers in each BTSV group who feel they should not discuss a given topic.

more willing to discuss any given topic than those teachers with a high belief in these values, but that the difference between the groups is significant only for four of the thirteen topics. Teachers in the low BTSV group are significantly more willing than teachers in the high BTSV group to discuss "LSD and Pot," "Communist Ideology," the "Railroad Baron Era," and "Artificial Insemination of Human Beings." It is interesting to note that these topics vary considerably in their controversial nature. The Railroad Baron Era, an issue from the past, was identified by the teachers as a completely non-controversial topic, while "Communist Ideology" was identified as a moderately controversial topic, and "LSD and Pot" and "Artificial Insemination of Human Beings" as extremely controversial

topics. Since the BTSV groups did not differ significantly in their reluctance to discuss other topics such as "Biological Evolution" and "Birth Control," (also considered highly controversial), it appears that the overt controversial nature of a topic is not the main factor operating to cause the teachers in the high BTSV group to be reluctant to discuss a topic.

From responses to other items on the questionnaire regarding reasons the teachers give for not discussing certain issues, we find that teachers who score high on the BTSV scale have a greater tendency to state that a given issue is not pertinent to their class and therefore should not be discussed. Evidently, teachers who score high on the BTSV scale are willing to discuss social issues as long as they think the issue is pertinent and are able to control the specific issues discussed. It is also important to note that the overt controversial nature of a topic is not necessarily related to whether or not the issue is actually presented as a controversial issue in the classroom. For example, a discussion of birth control, (identified by the teachers as a very controversial topic) could focus on descriptions of birth control programs throughout the world and ignore related value issues, such as the sanctity of personal privacy and the conception of human life. It is quite possible for a teacher to discuss topics which are overtly highly controversial in a very safe, straight-forward, bland fashion.

The teachers were also asked if they would be willing to discuss all of the topics listed. As may be seen in Table VIII, although there is no difference among the BTSV groups regarding the discussion of one or more issues in the classroom during the preceding month, there is a significant difference in their

TABLE VIII

DISCUSSION OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
Chi Square Analysis

	BTSV GROUPS				T-Test Between Low and High Groups
	Low	Medium	High	Chi	
Percent of teachers in each BTSV group who have discussed one or more issues in the last month	91%	94%	88%	2.84	0.64
Percent of teachers in each BTSV group who would discuss all topics	53%	37%	36%	11.52**	3.06**

** .01 level of significance

willingness to discuss all of the topics listed. Fifty-three percent of the teachers with a low belief in traditional sociopolitical values said they would discuss all of the topics in their classroom, while only 36 percent of the teachers with high scores on the BTSV scale indicated that they would be willing to discuss all of the topics listed.

Table IX summarizes the results of an analysis of variance performed on related questionnaire items. This analysis indicates that, although there is no difference between the groups

TABLE IX

DISCUSSION OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
Analysis of Variance

Variable	F-Ratio for Three BTSV Groups	t-Ratio for Low and High Groups
Number of listed topics ordinarily discussed in the classroom.	1.08	1.42
Number of listed topics discussed last month.	1.72	1.52
Number of topics which should not be discussed in the classroom.	5.96**	-3.41***

** significant at .01 level
*** significant at .001 level

in the number of issues they ordinarily discuss or in the number of issues they had discussed in the classroom during the previous month, there is a significant difference between the groups in the number of listed topics which they feel should not be discussed in the classroom.

High belief in traditional sociopolitical values evidently is not related to the total number of issues discussed in the classroom nor the time spent discussing these issues, but it is related to the number of issues which are not discussed. The teachers with a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values may have set ideas about what should be discussed and what should not be discussed in their classroom. These teachers may limit their students' freedom to bring up and delve into specific topics.

Use of Materials

In order to examine critically social issues and to make considered judgments about relevant social action, it is important that students and teachers investigate differing points of view and be willing to utilize and analyze all relevant sources of information. Several writers have observed that teachers have been lax in their use of a variety of classroom materials, i.e., teachers rely on information almost exclusively on standard texts.[13] This reliance on standard texts has important ramifications for the study of social issues. Standard texts tend to ignore controversial issues, or if they deal with a topic, they do so in an "antiseptic" and uncritical manner.[14]

In this study the investigators were interested in finding out whether or not a teacher's belief in authoritarian and traditional sociopolitical values affected his selection and use of materials in the classroom. Teachers were given a list of types of materials on two topics, population planning and Communism, and they were asked to indicate which ones they would ordinarily use in the classroom. In Table X, the percentage of teachers who responded that they would ordinarily use a given type of material is summarized by BTSV groups.

From the data presented in Table X, it is apparent that the use of a given material, in a number of instances, is strongly related to the teachers' belief in traditional sociopolitical values. In the unit on Communism, although there is very little difference between low and high BTSV groups in the use of standard texts and materials from veterans' groups, American scholars, or professional education associations, there is a significant difference in the teachers' use of all other materials. The teachers with a low belief in traditional sociopolitical values are much more willing than those with a high belief to use such materials as original Communist sources, Soviet books and pamphlets, and writings by Soviet scholars, which may present a different and possibly favorable picture of Communism; they also are more willing to use biased sources from "both sides," so to speak, such as materials produced by the American Communist Party or anti-Communist organizations,

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[13]See John R. Palmer, "Selection and Use of Textbooks and Audio-Visual Materials," New Challenges in the Social Studies, eds., Byron G. Massialas and Frederick R. Smith (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1965), pp. 155-184.

[14]C. Benjamin Cox and Byron G. Massialas (eds.), Social Studies in the United States: A Critical Appraisal (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1967).

TABLE X

TYPES OF MATERIALS USED IN THE CLASSROOM

MATERIALS ORDINARILY USED	BTSV GROUPS(a)			Total	
	Low	Medium	High	N	Chi
A. Population Planning					
Studies analyzing the population explosion, family planning, and birth control techniques.	80%	81%	78%	462	.59
Books and pamphlets published in foreign countries regarding national family planning.	58%	41%	44%	462	10.24**
Material produced by independent non-profit organizations such as Planned Parenthood.	73%	73%	75%	462	.18
Standard texts.	67%	69%	69%	462	.14
Material produced by pressure groups such as the Population Crisis Committee.	47%	36%	22%	462	21.57***
Material prepared by religious organizations such as the Catholic Church.	56%	51%	47%	462	2.18
Reprints from popular magazines such as Time.	78%	74%	63%	462	8.43*
Reprints from Congressional hearings such as those held by Senator Gruening's committee.	49%	44%	38%	462	3.37
Materials produced by government agencies such as The Children's Bureau and Bureau of Family Services in H.E.W.	72%	69%	57%	462	8.24*
Papers critical of the overemphasis on population control.	50%	48%	33%	462	10.46**
Material written by distinguished population scholars.	73%	67%	56%	462	10.22**

TABLE X (continued)

MATERIALS ORDINARLY USED	BTSV GROUPS(a) Low	Medium	High	Total N	Chi
B. Communism					
Standard textbooks.	78%	80%	82%	463	.87
Original Communist sources (e.g., the Communist Manifesto.)	84%	77%	68%	464	11.46**
Books and pamphlets published in the Soviet Union.	65%	47%	38%	464	24.22***
Material produced by such organizations as the American Legion.	45%	38%	45%	464	2.09
Material prepared by such organizations as the John Birch Society.	51%	34%	29%	464	17.05***
Material produced by the American Communist Party.	57%	44%	31%	463	22.81***
Material written by distinguished American scholars.	82%	84%	79%	464	1.53
Material written by distinguished Soviet scholars.	74%	70%	61%	464	7.05*
Material developed by professional educational associations.	90%	86%	88%	464	1.23

* .05 level of significance
** .01 level of significance
*** .001 level of significance

(a) Percent of teachers in each BTSV group who ordinarily use a given type of material.

which represent extreme positions on Communism. The latter materials are no doubt harder to obtain and require more skill in utilization than the former. Evidently, teachers with a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values are either less willing to take the time and effort required to obtain these materials or, because they view materials presenting extreme positions or favorable views of Communism as unsafe, are unwilling to utilize them in the classroom.

These conclusions are supported by the findings regarding use of materials in a population planning unit. There is little difference between the high and low BTSV groups in their probable use of studies analyzing the population explosion, standard texts, Congressional hearings, or materials produced by non-profit organizations, but teachers with high belief in traditional values are much less willing to use all other sources. These teachers are more hesitant to use materials, such as those produced by pressure groups, popular magazine authors, and by writers critical of population control, all of which may present controversial positions or espouse a one-sided point of view. Although the high BTSV groups are less willing to use materials produced by religious organizations, the difference between the groups is not significant. It may be that materials produced by religious organizations on population planning are considered relatively safe to use and, therefore, are more frequently used by the high BTSV teachers.

The reticence of teachers with a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values to use foreign books and pamphlets regarding family planning, materials produced by government agencies, and papers by population scholars may reflect, as with the topic of Communism, their unwillingness to spend time obtaining these materials or their belief that these materials are too difficult for their students to understand.

It is apparent from the above data that the teachers with a high belief, as contrasted with those with a low belief, in traditional sociopolitical values (a) use considerably fewer sources in their study of social issues and, (b) generally, select those materials which do not present controversial viewpoints, are relatively easy to obtain, and are less difficult to interpret and understand. These findings support our original hypothesis that teachers who have a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values limit the search for information on a given issue. This tendency on the part of teachers with high BTSV rankings has important ramifications for the teaching of social issues in the classroom. Evidently students in classrooms with teachers having a high belief in traditional values are being given less of an opportunity to read materials espousing conflicting views and to cope with and interpret relevant scholarly research.

Fact and Opinion

In an earlier study it was found that high school teachers are often unable to determine whether a statement is based on fact or on opinion. Their responses to one statement in particular stood out. Forty-two percent of the teachers in the sample indicated that the following statement was a fact: "The American form of government may not be perfect, but it is the best type of government yet devised by man." It was concluded that the stronger an individual's agreement with values expressed in a statement, the stronger his inclination to accept the statement as fact.[15]

These findings prompted us to include a fact-opinion matrix in the study. Our hypothesis was that the stronger a teacher's belief in traditional sociopolitical values, the more difficult it would be for him to identify opinion statements. The statements included in our study are listed in Table XI. For each of these items, the teachers were asked to indicate whether they thought the statement was "fact," "mostly fact," "mostly opinion," or "opinion."[16] The percent of teachers in each BTSV group who thought a given statement was fact or mostly fact is indicated in Table XI.

Four of these statements, "American troops are presently fighting in Vietnam," "Communism is a political and economic ideology," "All living things reproduce," and "Every known society has had some means of communication," were considered by the researchers to be fact statements. As can be seen by the data, the teachers in our study had little trouble recognizing these factual statements. Over 90 percent of the teachers in each of the BTSV groups indicated that the statements were fact or mostly fact.

When we look at the opinion statements, however, we see a sharp contrast between the ability of the high and low BTSV groups to identify correctly opinion statements. With the exception of one statement, "All American troops should withdraw from Vietnam," the teahers with a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values are significantly less able to recognize

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[15]Harmon Zeigler, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

[16]To calculate the t-Ratio shown for the low and high BTSV groups in Table XI, a score of 1 was assigned to the response "fact," 2 to "mostly fact," 3 to "mostly opinion," and 4 to "opinion."

TABLE XI

TEACHERS WHO IDENTIFIED FACT-OPINION STATEMENTS AS FACT

Statements	Percent of teachers in each group who said the statement was fact or mostly fact: BTSV GROUPS Low	Medium	High	Chi	T-Test Between Low and High Groups
The participation of the Federal Government in local affairs leads to undesirable Federal controls.	17%	25%	31%	22.57***	4.08***
The American form of government may not be perfect, but it's the best type of government yet devised by man.	26%	45%	63%	61.17***	7.82***
American troops are presently fighting in Vietnam.	99%	100%	99%	5.14	0.20
Communism is evil.	09%	21%	42%	89.06***	8.38***
All American troops should withdraw from Vietnam.	07%	04%	06%	8.13	0.62
The United States ought to expend more Federal funds on solving domestic problems rather than to spend so much on foreign commitments.	15%	29%	35%	28.32***	4.63***
Communism is a political and economic ideology.	90%	91%	91%	10.22	0.03
All living things reproduce.	94%	94%	95%	3.65	0.48
Underdeveloped nations of the world should attempt to enter the industrial world.	21%	35%	29%	18.44**	2.90**
Every known society has had some means of communication.	97%	98%	97%	1.90	0.86
Students should be presented with at least the biological aspects of human reproduction.	47%	60%	67%	37.56***	4.71***
All American students should take English throughout their school years.	34%	57%	59%	38.69***	5.39***
All students ought to study literature in order to understand mankind.	29%	48%	50%	33.66***	4.92***
N =	159	147	157		

* .05 level of significance
** .01 level of significance
*** .001 level of significance

opinion statements. The difference between the high and low BTSV groups is striking and in most cases significant at the .001 level and beyond. For example, only one-fourth of the teachers in the low BTSV group identified the statement, "The American form of government may not be perfect, but it's the best type of government yet devised by man," as fact or mostly fact, while almost two-thirds of the teachers in the high BTSV group thought the statement was fact or mostly fact. The responses to the item, "Communism is evil," shows the same marked contrast between the groups. Nine percent of the low BTSV group as contrasted with 42 percent of the high BTSV group identified this statement as fact or mostly fact.

One would think that the "ought" statements, such as "All American students should take English throughout their school years," included in the questionnaire would be easily identifiable as prescriptive opinion statements, yet, once again, a considerable number of the teachers in our sample could not make the distinction between fact and opinion. Further, the teachers with a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values were consistently less able than those teachers with a low belief in these values to identify opinion statements.

It is important to note that in this study no effort was made to distinguish those teachers who are politically liberal from those who are conservative. Several of the opinion items such as "Communism is evil" and "The participation of the Federal government in local affairs leads to undesirable Federal controls" reflect conservative values, but other items, such as "Students should be presented with at least the biological aspects of human reproduction," "All American students should take English throughout their school years," and "All students ought to study literature in order to understand mankind," do not have an explicit liberal or conservative political bias. Since the teachers with a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values have a significantly more difficult time than those with a low belief in traditional sociopolitical values recognizing all these statements as opinion, it cannot be ascertained from our data whether or not a teacher's political views affect his score on the BTSV scale or affect his evaluation of whether a statement is fact or opinion.

The finding that teachers with a high belief in traditional sociopolitical values have trouble distinguishing between fact and opinion has serious implications for students in classes taught by teachers with high belief in traditional values. If these teachers regard opinion assertions as fact, it may be that not only are they not helping their students develop critical thinking skills, but they are actually teaching their students that certain opinion assertions are fact.

SUMMARY

This study revealed that secondary school teachers vary considerably in their belief in traditional sociopolitical values and that their belief in these values is significantly related to various indicators of quality of classroom discussion of social issues. For example, a greater number of teachers with a low score on the scale of belief in traditional sociopolitical values as opposed to those with a high score are willing to discuss all controversial issues in the classroom. Likewise, the low BTSV group uses instructional materials from several sources thus promoting the expression of divergent and often conflicting points of view. On one of the most important cognitive operations of teaching--ability to distinguish fact from opinion--the performance of the high BTSV group was significantly lower from that of the low BTSV group. The performance of all the teachers on this skill was quite low. This confirms earlier findings that many teachers have not mastered some basic skills necessary for logical communication, one of which is the ability to separate factual statements from value statements. To many of them if the value statement expresses their own values and sentiments, it is categorized a fact. According to this strange logic, opinions are facts when one agrees with them regardless of the statement's logical or evidential components.

What is the demographic profile of the teachers who score high on the scale of belief in traditional sociopolitical values? First of all, teachers who major in fields other than the social sciences and humanities as undergraduates tend to score high on the scale. Physical education, education, and natural sciences, in that order, seem to attract a disproportionate number of high BTSV teachers. There is also a tendency of very small colleges (enrollment no greater than 700) to attract a larger number of these teachers. The high BTSV teachers have several years of teaching experience, thus they are older members of the profession. These teachers usually live in the same community in which they teach; the low BTSV teachers tend to be commuters. Sex, tenure status, type of community, and level of education beyond the Bachelor's degree do not seem to be important in distinguishing between the high and low BTSV teachers.

What can the profession do to promote a more critical discussion of social issues in the classroom? First of all, persons preparing to be teachers need to have systematic training in the nature of social problems as well as in developing analytic models to deal with them. Teachers-in-training need to understand that the traditional scientific model does not apply equally to both "is" and "ought" statements. The scientific process has to be altered accordingly

when value problems are analyzed. Secondly, teachers need to understand that the classroom is a microcosm of society and that realistic analysis of social problems assumes that all points of view of the society must be expressed. Thus, teachers need to change their notions about their role as a final authority on all questions of fact or value. The change in role ought to be directed toward establishing a classroom climate which encourages all judgments to be expressed but requires explicit grounds for judgmental claims. Finally, it might be advisable for teachers who have been practitioners for a relatively long time to participate regularly in intensive seminars and workshops which deal with social issues and with ways that issues can be examined in a true spirit of inquiry. Only when we begin to attend to these matters will the goal of rational and critical examination of social issues in the classroom be achieved.